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Japan

(This is not an official statement of policy by the Department of State; it is intended only as a guide to the contents of this volume.)

Since 1861, the Department of State's documentary series *Foreign Relations of the United States* has constituted the official record of the foreign policy and diplomacy of the United States. Historians in the Office of the Historian collect, arrange, and annotate the principal documents comprising the record of American foreign policy. The standards for the preparation of the series and the general deadlines for its publication were reestablished by the *Foreign Relations of the United States* statute of October 28, 1991 (22 U.S.C. 4351, *et seq*.), which called for publication of a full and accurate record at 30 years after the events covered. Volumes in the *Foreign Relations* series are published when all the necessary editing, declassification, and printing steps have been completed.

The documents in this volume are drawn from the centralized indexed files of the Department of State and the decentralized Bureau, Office, and other lot files of the relevant Departmental units. The volume also includes records from the Department of Defense and the Central Intelligence Agency. In addition, the editor made extensive use of the Presidential and other papers at the Lyndon B. Johnson Library in Austin, Texas. Almost all of the documents printed here were originally classified. The Office of Information Programs and Services, Bureau of Administration, Department of State, in concert with the appropriate offices in the Department and in other agencies or governments, carried out the declassification of the selected documents.

The following is a summary of the important issues covered in the volume. Parenthetical citations are to numbered documents in the text.

United States policy toward Japan included several broad objectives that remained unchanged throughout the Johnson Administration: to decrease U.S. military

assistance by convincing the Japanese to increase their domestic military spending and procurement; to motivate the Japanese to increase aid to less developed countries, particularly to Vietnam; to maintain the U.S. military presence on and control over U.S. bases on Japanese territory; to make sure Japan stayed a moderate, pro-Western ally; and to encourage a stronger, more independent, and more internationally involved Japan. At the same time, the Johnson administration sought to discourage Japanese positions, such as the recognition of Communist China, that would put Japan radically at odds with regional and global policies of the United States. Despite disputes on some important economic issues, Japan and the United States moved toward closer cooperation through high-level, regularly scheduled discussions within the context of the Joint Committee on Trade and Economic Affairs, which convened for only the third time in January 1964, and the newly established Japan-U.S. Policy Planning Committee, which held its inaugural meeting in September 1964. In 1965, President Johnson became personally engaged in the relationship with Japan and began to work closely with Prime Minister Sato to foster strong bilateral ties. In cooperation with the United States, Japan also assumed a larger international role. Japan reached a settlement with the Republic of Korea (see *Foreign Relations*, 1964-1968, vol. XXIX, Part 1, Korea), thus ending the estrangement existent since World War II; extended assistance to Vietnam, Indonesia, and other Asian countries; became involved in Africa; and emerged as a key contributor and supporter of the Asian Development Bank. Japan also moved to normalize relations with Communist China, but, acceding to U.S. wishes, reluctantly curtailed those attempts and remained strongly supportive of the Republic of Taiwan. By the end of the Johnson Presidency, the United States and Japan enjoyed a more mature partnership, but one not without tensions.

During the first year of the Johnson administration relations between the United States and Japan, although fundamentally sound, suffered from irritants arising on several fronts. The Japanese were increasingly disturbed by what they viewed as expanding protectionism in the United States that hindered their economic freedom and development. Although they appeared to embrace overall U.S. objectives, the Japanese felt the United States disdained their interests. Japan requested, but failed to receive, civil airline routes to New York, was denied favorable tax consideration, faced wool and

textile import restrictions, and feared limits on its fishing rights. (18, 22, 23) Ambassador Reischauer in mid-July 1965 warned of the growing seriousness of festering problems and urged the development of a new relationship with Japan. (55) Secretary Rusk realized the importance of implementing measures "to sustain a satisfactory economic growth rate in Japan and further to bind Japanese interests with those of the United States," and expressed his desire to reduce substantially by early 1966 "existing irritations and misunderstandings in US-Japanese relations." (62)

One of the most significant issues between the United States and Japan concerned military matters. Mounting concerns arose over defense and security issues, particularly U.S. administrative and military control of the Ryukyu and the Bonin Islands and U.S. policy toward Vietnam. Japanese dissatisfaction with U.S. military control over the territories and population of the Bonin Islands and especially the Ryukyu Islands, with its key installation on Okinawa, had by 1964 created hostility and suspicion between U.S. officials on Okinawa and in the Embassy in Tokyo on the one hand and leaders of the Japanese Government on the other. The Japanese argued that loss of territorial jurisdiction was a result of the Second World War, which had long passed into history, and it was inappropriate now that Japan was a U.S. ally governed by a democratic, parliamentary system. As Ambassador U. Alexis Johnson reported to the President in August of 1967, the question of reversion of the Ryukyu Islands was " 'the last remaining issue' between Japan and the United States" and "the Japanese find it 'unnatural' for Japanese territory to be run by an American General." (93) The issue of territory and bases intensified with the escalation of the war in Vietnam. U.S. bombing campaigns against North Vietnam in 1965 spread fear that Japan could be drawn into the worsening conflict. In addition, although Prime Minister Sato officially placed Japan firmly behind U.S. policy in Vietnam, sentiment among many Japanese political leaders and within the Japanese public saw U.S. military actions in Southeast Asia made possible by the existence of large-scale bases on the Japanese islands and, as the year progressed, seriously doubted that the United States was on the right course in Vietnam. (46, 55) By late July 1965 concerns mounted within Japan as well as in the United States. On July 31 Under Secretary of State Ball advised Secretary McNamara that "recurrent use of the Okinawa bases [for raids on North Vietnam], as a practical political matter, will seriously

heighten pressures in Japan on the issue of Okinawa generally, and indeed will significantly affect the whole atmosphere of our relations with Japan in every sphere." (57) The issue of bases was also closely connected to the Mutual Security Treaty between the United States and Japan and its renewal without modification in 1970.

The question of the restoration of Japanese sovereignty over the Bonin Islands, the strategic importance of which paled in comparison to the Ryukyus, opened with the relative modest Japanese request that former Bonin Islanders, the vast majority of whom were relocated to mainland Japan during World War II, receive permission to visit the graves of their relatives and, perhaps, to return permanently to their island homeland. (35) The U.S. bases on the Bonins served as backups to those on Okinawa and in the Philippines, housing navigation aids and weather surveillance, as well as a station for monitoring of major sea lanes. To protect current and planned capabilities, the U.S. military establishment was reluctant to consider repatriation and reversion of the Bonins, even though the islands had little actual strategic importance. (86, 91) Another tie was the symbolic importance Americans attached to the island of Iwo Jima and its role in World War II. Numerous discussions of the military and political issues surrounding reversion of the Bonins took place between high-level Japanese and U.S. officials, including discussions between President Johnson and Prime Minister Sato in November 1967, the result being the complete return of the Bonin Islands to Japanese control in 1968. The agreement was signed in Tokyo on April 5 and went into effect on June 26. (87, 88, 91, 104, 118)

The reversion of the Ryukyus developed differently. In mid-1964, U. Alexis Johnson, later appointed Ambassador to Japan, proposed that the United States needed to reconcile "the political desires of the Ryukyuans and the Japanese with the military requirements of our mission there." (14) Similarly, James C. Thomson, Jr., of the National Security Council Staff, characterized the situation as "a simmering and potentially dangerous issue in terms of U.S. relations with Japan." (23) By the following year, some U.S. officials addressed the growing volatility of the Ryukyus, foreseeing an explosion there if the present course remained unchanged. (55) Sentiment among Okinawans for reversion of the Islands to Japan gained strength in the following years. Although the Japanese realized that full reversion could not be achieved at that time, they

attempted to separate the issue of U.S. bases from that of administrative control of the islands to assuage the impassioned populace. (59) To address administrative issues, the Departments of State and Defense agreed to introduce democratic reforms, and on December 20, 1965, President Johnson signed an Executive Order introducing election of the Chief Executive of the Ryukyus by the legislature. Direct election of the Chief Executive followed. On January 31, 1968, President Johnson signed an order implementing that change, and the first election was held in November 1968. Although governmental and administrative issues involving an expansion of local autonomy were addressed, the major U.S. concern was to preserve U.S. military rights on Okinawa. (73, 78) The Joint Chiefs of Staff recorded their concerns about returning the Ryukyus and the Bonins to Japan, arguing that reversion would jeopardize national security by weakening the U.S. strategic position in the Far East. (89, 100) The Japanese Government realized the hazards as well, for it recognized that Japanese security depended on the presence of U.S. forces and a U.S. nuclear deterrent to safeguard Japan from aggression and attack. (87) Gradually, a consensus was reached whereby the U.S. and Japan would introduce internal reforms while working toward achieving total reversion in the near future. (90, 99, 102, 105, 106, 107)

One of the issues that caused tension in U.S.-Japanese relations in 1964 was the berthing of a nuclear-powered ship for the first time in a Japanese port. (19) As the only nation to be attacked by atomic weapons, the Japanese public and government were particularly concerned about potential nuclear weapons in Japanese waters. Such an overriding aversion to nuclear weapons placed the United States and Japan in difficult positions. The resulting policy of ambiguity caused problems for both countries. Prime Minister Sato, shortly after assuming office, privately concluded that Japan should join the ranks of the nuclear powers, particularly in light of the recent nuclear detonation by Communist China. Sato knew, however, that the Japanese public was unprepared to accept that view. (37)

Japan's allergy to nuclear energy was revealed in heated student demonstrations sparked by the visit of the first nuclear-powered surface ship, the USS Enterprise, to Japan in January 1968. Although the nuclear issue remained contentious, the Japanese knew that their security depended on the United States, including its nuclear capabilities.

With Communist China now a nuclear power and a menacing neighbor, and with instability in Korea, particularly in 1968, and the heightened conflict in Southeast Asia, Japan grappled with the realities of a nuclear world, even as it sought to maintain its pacifism. (113, 114)

During the Johnson administration, U.S. officials became concerned that the covert programs of supporting key pro-American Japanese officials, begun in the late 1950s and continuing into the early 1960s, and splitting off the moderate wing of the leftist opposition, was neither appropriate nor worth the risk of exposure. As a result, these programs were phased out in 1964, but broader covert programs—propaganda and social action—to encourage key Japanese elements to reject the influence of the left continued at moderate levels through 1968. (1)

The last part of the volume documents the first election in Okinawa, which was won not by the candidates the United States preferred, but by the pro-reversion candidates. This outcome of the Okinawan election was not the only setback for the United States during 1968. President Johnson's announcement in March 1968 that he would not seek another term as President created much hand wringing in Japan. Many in Japan interpreted that decision, coupled with the bombing halt in Vietnam, as indications that the United States had followed the wrong course in Southeast Asia, was admitting defeat in Vietnam, would subsequently withdraw from Asia, and would reverse its policy toward Communist China. Some urged Prime Minister Sato to undertake new international policies independent of the United States, while others criticized him sharply for having too closely allied the country with the United States. (119) The United States also came under attack for having deployed B-52s on Okinawa for bombing raids on North Vietnamese cities, and for having allegedly leaked radioactive waste in Japanese port waters when one of its nuclear-powered submarines was in the port of Sasebo. (121) In turn, U.S. officials were dismayed and angered by the Japanese reaction to those matters as well as by lack of Japanese response to critical situations, such as the North Korean raid on South Korea followed by the seizure of the USS *Pueblo*. (115, 123) The Japanese position was countered by the U.S. argument, made by President Johnson and others, that the U.S. bore a heavy burden and paid a heavy price

for Japan's security and Japan could no longer continue to take its security for granted, but must pay the costs as well. (124)

In all, the Johnson administration's policy toward Japan was one of transition during a time of considerable tension. The reversion of the Bonins only raised the more serious question of the return of Okinawa to Japan. The Vietnam war was an irritant to relations, and increasingly the Johnson administration came to question whether the Japanese were doing enough to maintain their own security. As Japan increased as an economic power, conflicts with the United States were inevitable.